

Remarks

This letter is in response to the Office action dated March 8, 2006. Upon entry of this paper, claims 1 and 16-22 will be pending in the application. Claims 2-15 and 23 are withdrawn and claims 24-30 are cancelled.

The Office action required restriction to one of the following inventions:

- I. Claims 1-23, drawn to a ring mechanism for a loose-leaf binder (class 402, subclass 31); and
- II. Claims 24-30, drawn to a method of manufacturing a ring mechanism for a loose-leaf binder (class 29, subclass 509).

In response to this restriction requirement, Applicant hereby elects Group I (claims 1-23) for further examination. Unelected claims 24-30 are canceled from this application. Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application to the unelected claims.

The action also required an election of species from the following patentably distinct species:

- a. Species 1, as shown in Figs. 9 and 10;
- b. Species 2, as shown in Figs. 9A and 10A;
- c. Species 3, as shown in Figs. 11-13; and
- d. Species 4, as shown in Figs. 14-17.

In response to this election of species requirement, Applicant elects Species 4 (Figs. 14-17) for further examination. Claims 1 and 16-22 read on the elected species. Claims 2-15 and 23 have been withdrawn in accordance with the election.

With respect to the election of species requirement, the Office action states that no claims have been determined to be generic. Applicant disagrees with this statement. Applicant believes claim 1 is generic to the above listed species shown in

Figs. 9 and 10, Figs. 9A and 10A, Figs. 11-13, and Figs. 14-17. Claim 1 reads on each of the species. Each species represents a ring mechanism for a loose-leaf binder. Each species comprises a thin, elongate plate and at least two ring members supported by the elongate plate for relative movement of the ring members between an open position in which the ring members are spaced apart and loose-leaf pages may be received on and removed from at least one of the ring members, and a closed position in which the ring members are engaged to form a ring which is configured to capture the loose-leaf pages on the ring while permitting movement of the pages along the ring. In addition, in each species the elongate plate has longitudinal ends, at least one of which includes first and second end portions located on one transverse side of the elongate plate and bent over to present a longitudinally facing surface which is blunt.

Applicant requests a one-month extension of time up to and including May 8, 2006, to respond to the Office action dated March 8, 2006. A check for payment of the extension is included with this paper. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment of government fees to Deposit Account No. 19-1345.

Respectfully Submitted,



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